

UPDATE Spring 2015

Circuit 26/4,
Southampton District



Airfield Church New Display Case

We had been concerned that our presence in the school where we meet was almost invisible from the street. The first suggestion we followed up was to ask the school whether we could place a nativity scene in the school car park, in view of the road. This was ruled out because the school warned that it would be prone to accidental damage. Instead a wonderful counter suggestion came back to us: Robin, the school caretaker, could construct a display box for us and set it into the school fence where it was angled in towards the school entrance. Just before the end of term we were able to install our first display. A photo is attached. We will now be visible all year round.



Big Questions brought to Circuit Assembly

- You might like to think about these or use them in a discussion group.

- ? Is it time the Hippocratic Oath taken by doctors at the beginning of their careers was changed to encompass "Assisted Dying"?
- ? Did Jesus actually walk on water?
- ? How do you see the future of the Methodist Church?
- ? If I keep pestering God with questions does this not suggest I have not the faith to think he will answer in his own time?
- ? Why was Jesus crucified?
- ? Why is God so often silent? And sometimes feels absent?
- ? What is your view on same sex marriage?
- ? Should we pray for our enemies? If so, how?
- ? Prayers of Intercession; should there be a limit, allowing more pause of thought between?
Sometimes we get lost in the shopping list with little time for reflection.

We seek to tell others about Jesus in a variety of ways.

Oakridge is the only church on the estate. About 20-25 members meet each Sunday; mainly elderly but there are usually three children with parents.

Three years ago we organised a Tree Festival and Café Style Carol service with afternoon tea. Every organisation meeting on our premises decorated their own tree to reflect their activity. This brought groups together socially, but not many local people came to view the trees. The Carol Service with tea amongst the trees was well attended, and the homely atmosphere was appreciated. So we have continued Café Church and Carols with Tea, highlighting Christmas trees in different ways each year. Numbers have grown for Christmas services, with the same people coming back even if absent the rest of the year. The Nativity Service is popular with all ages and some annual visitors are even keen to take part in the impromptu drama! A Carol Service organised for residents at the nearby sheltered flats is well attended.

Another successful and enjoyable Christmas activity is "Posada" - Nativity figures of Mary, Joseph and a donkey. They "travel" round Oakridge, daily seeking shelter with members of the Church during Advent. Another Posada travels round parents and children of the Nursery. St Bernard's Nursery meets on the premises every weekday, doing excellent work. We have good rapport with the leaders, and they are very supportive of special services and events.

"Sparklers", for mums/dads and toddlers, run by a church member, is at maximum number and filling a need amongst families. It is enjoyed by all who come. Messy Church is thriving, under the leadership of Mrs Debbie Veel (Circuit Pastoral & Outreach Lay Employee) with a team of helpers. Debbie also goes into local schools, and this is appreciated by the church and the schools.

Nursery, Brownies, Guides and Cub Scouts are invited to join us on special occasions. We have had a good response to the last two Harvests and to a Christmas Celebration when children dressed a tree with decorations they had made themselves. We are hoping that these groups may join us more regularly.

Weekly coffee morning attracts a few residents from the Towers (sheltered flats), recently increasing in number. We start a craft group there in February. As we try to engage with people locally, our prayer is that God will lead our thinking and will add his blessing and grace.

Kempshott Church.

Kempshott Church is a small Church with a membership of circa 20 based in the outskirts of Basingstoke town just off junction 7 of the M3.

What we try to achieve with our relatively small numbers is to maintain a strong fellowship that can support not only the diverse needs of our congregation but also the wider community both locally and internationally.

Whilst the Sunday morning service remains the key point of contact with our congregation we have a

number of other activities which deepen our fellowship.

Over twenty years ago we had our first Church weekend away. That has continued yearly and our fellowship has benefitted from the time together and the diverse attendees drawn from the congregation and like minded friends, neighbours and relatives. This year we are going to "Green Pastures" in Poole and still have a few vacancies for anyone interested.

Sometime ago it was recognised that there was an opportunity to provide a meal for those who cook for themselves and also to raise money for charity. The "First Sunday Lunch" has now become a fixture in the diary and some 20 people attend at Ian & Charmian's. Those imbuing come from various of Churches and continue to raise money for a number of Charities.

Another group that originated from recognising an opportunity is "KOMBAT" (Kempshott Old Men Behaving Absolutely Terribly). This is a group of chaps, many of whom are only loosely attached to the Church, who meet on a monthly basis doing "men" type things such as visiting the local brewery, 10pin bowling etc (we have yet to attend any pole dancing!).

Other groups include a Evening Fellowship group, Ladies group, Kaleidoscope and attending a bible study with St Andrew's.

Our Church is used by a local dance school and their performance, with the associated parents and grandparents, at our Carol Service has become a regular event.

Members of the Church were instrumental in establishing the May Place Hostel for homeless in Basingstoke as well as the Camrose Day Centre for vulnerable people. We remain on the board of a Charity which supports a similar client group right across southern England.

On an international basis, the members of the Church founded the Samuel Fund supporting the pupils and teachers of the Margaret Bell School in Zambia and Pastor Kwacha Mvula who is helping to rehabilitate released prisoners.

I hope the above gives an insight into how we are trying to live and show our faith in Kempshott.

Colin How

Journeying On - creating a Lent resource

When I was first asked if I would like to come on 17th January to Gosbrook Road Methodist Church in Caversham where representatives from the churches in the Circuit would be coming together to help create our own resource for Lent, I felt very optimistic that I would be filled with inspiration about what material I would be able to contribute towards the Circuit Resource on the Theme 'Journeying On'. But as the date grew closer I was less and less sure of what I could produce. We were sent in advance some ideas eg a prayer or poem, words about a favourite scriptures passage or hymn,

a testimony, a crossword or word search or a picture either drawn or photographed.

My thoughts went to how Jesus must have felt on His journey through the wilderness and I wrote a short prayer that Jesus might have prayed to his heavenly father while he was alone, hot, cold, hungry, thirsty and tempted for forty days and forty nights. Then my thoughts moved through Lent to Good Friday and then Easter Day.

Two Marys on two different journeys who both lost their sons and how they felt. One of them Mary the mother of Jesus whose son died on a cross and one my friend Mary, a Methodist Minister whose small son Mark died of a brain tumour. On the first Easter morning, when Jesus rose from the dead, Mary was filled with joy. Her son was alive again. Mark's mum Mary also realised as she sat by his grave on this Easter morning that his journey on earth had finished and it was as the words of his favourite hymn said "Time to Dance with the Lord of the Dance"

I arrived at the meeting and was worried that my pieces were not suitable or good enough but I was met by many people from the Circuit who also felt the same way. We need not have worried. We were put at our ease by Revd Alison Parker and after the first worship slot we worked with a partner or in a group to produce more items. Somehow, amongst the laughter and mixing with those from other churches from different parts of our New Circuit we were able to blend and to even write a New Vision Hymn which was sung at the next worship time. It showed me that not only on this Lent Journey, getting to know those who make up our Circuit can be done joyfully and prayerfully and if we decide next time we are invited to a Circuit Event that we do not need to be apprehensive but to go to it and to meet each other face to face. Working together, sharing our talents and our love of God is a great way for our Basingstoke and Reading Circuit to be journeying on together.

Grace Mercer

This Lent resource is printed and should be available FREE in your church soon. It is also available on the Circuit Website www.basingstokereadingmethodists.uk

Lent Quiet Day at Silchester

on Saturday 7th March, 10am to 3pm,
Cost - £6 (drinks included, bring a packed lunch)
Contact Angela Hiscock by 28th Feb to book a place:
e-mail angela.hiscock@btinternet.com
or tel 01256 850432

We plan to publish our circuit Update every quarter when the new plan is available and we shall be pleased to receive any contributions from circuit churches. *Next time: where can one get a coffee? Does your church have an open coffee morning?* Contact: update@basingstokereadingmethodists.uk Or Terry on 01256 328203 or Gill on 07990 815282